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AUTHOR Hook, Peter Edwin
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ABSTRACT

An unusual construction in Shina grammar is examined, particularly as it has been observed in the language form spoken in the Skardu region of Pakistan. The construction occurs in the use of the dative case with certain verbs. The patterns of occurrence and the origins of this phenomenon are analyzed through examples from Shina. (MSE)

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THE DISACQUISITION OF SUBJECTHOOD IN SHINA (SKARDU)

Peter Edwin Hook
University of Michigan

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The Disacquisition of Subjecthood in Shina (Skardu)

Peter Edwin Hook
University of Michigan

In brief remarks devoted to the Shina of Dras, Bailey (1924:280) notes a peculiar construction associated with the verb lezhonu 'to get': <1>

1 "The construction of this verb is remarkable. It takes the dative, like the Urdu milnā, and yet agrees in person and gender with the word which is in the dative case. Thus we have

more paisā lezhim, I shall get a pice.

A literal translation of this in Urdu would be

mujhe paisa milūgā ..."

In fact, the same oddity had been observed some fifty years before by R. B. Shaw (1878:56) in his notes to a short text in the Shina of Dras: <2>

2 "...moñ-re ā jawāb lādos.
me to this (f.) answer arrived.

Here the verb seems to be governed by the person of the Locative or Dative as in other cases it is by that of the Instrumentative (= ergative, PEH). Normally one would think this ought to be

moñ-re ā jawāb lādo
me to this answer reached (3rd pers)
or
moñ ā jawāb ____
I this answer received (1st pers)..."

Recently in the course of field work in northern Pakistan <3> we encountered the same construction in the Shina spoken in the vicinity of Skardu <4>:

3 mo-re ani byEbjune bilaa laal-us <5>
me-DT these eggs yesterday got-1s <6>
'I got these eggs yesterday.' (T)

Furthermore, contrary to what one might infer from the information given by Shaw and Bailey, the construction is not limited to a single verb 'get':

4 tu-re myo mu$ paru-d-ey-aa
you-DT my word hear-P-2s-QM
'Did you hear what I said?' (T)

5 mo-re tho mu$ amoT-us
me-DT your word forgot-1s
'I forgot what you said.' (T)

The data we have collected, while by no means complete, are sufficient to form a preliminary impression of the syntax and semantics of these constructions and make an informed guess about their origins.

In addition to lEj- 'obtain', paruj- 'hear; understand' and amoS- 'forget' the construction occurs with the following predicates:

paS- 'see':

6 tu-re jip paS-aai
you-DT jeep see-2sP
'You saw the jeep.' (S)

asako paS- 'dislike':

7 e mulaai gaa mo-re asak-i paS-emas
that girl-NM too me-DT bad-f see-1sPR
'I don't like that girl, either.' (T)

si(o)/khaco da$T- 'like/dislike':

8 salim-ere aNgrezi kitaabe si-E da$T-oN
salim-DT english books good-fp seem-3sPR
'Salim likes English books.' (S)
9 aao baal mo-re khac-o da$T-aas
that boy-NM me-DT bad-m seem-1sP
'I dislike(d) that boy.' (S)

taato da$T- 'feel hot':

10 mo-re taato da$T-aas
me-DT heat feel-1sP
'I feel hot.' (lit: 'I felt heat.') (T)

sujon b-/as- 'recognize/know':

11 mo-re tu sujon bil-us
me-DT you-NM known became-1s
'I recognized you.' (T)
12 o manuZo-re mo sujon h-oN (h- < as-)
that man-DT I-NM known be-3sPR
'That man knows me.' (T)

skomuS- 'be thirsty' (<Balti skom sEd 'be thirsty'):

13 mo-re vai ga skomuS-emus
me-DT water too thirst-1sPR <7>
'I'm thirsty, too.' (T)

phikir b- 'worry, be concerned (that)':

14 mo-re Jwal hut-e buj-oni phikir b-omus...
me-DT morning rise-CP go-INF worry become-1sPR
'I'm worried that I have to get up and go (somewhere) in the morning...' (T)

Perusing this list one notices that many of the items on it correspond in meaning to those predicates in other South Asian languages which require the so-called "dative-of-subject" construction (actually the "dative-of-agent" <8>). In Urdu, for example:

15 mujh-ko ye aNDe kal mil-e <8>
me-DT these eggs(m) yesterday got-mp
'I got these eggs yesterday.' (cf. ex. 3)
16 mujh-ko tumhaarii baat bhuul gaii <10>
me-DT your word forget went
'I forgot what you said.' (cf. ex. 5)
17 tum-ko jiip dikhaaii dii
you-DT jeep showing gave
'You saw the jeep.' (cf. ex. 6)
18 saliim ko Agrezii kitaabE acchii lagtii hAI
salim DT english books good seem are
'Salim likes English books.' (cf. ex. 8)
19 mujh-ko garmii lagii
me-DT heat hit
'I felt/feel hot.' (cf. ex. 10)

Furthermore, as is true in general of dative-of-agent expressions in Urdu and other South Asian languages, these "datives-of-agreement" in Shina express actions and events not subject to the will or control of their experiencers. A contrast in point is with predicates like Cak- 'look at' or kon d- 'listen to' (lit: 'give ear') where perception results from a conscious directing of attention toward a source. With these the dative-of-agreement is not possible:

20.a mo-re aa Ci$ paS-emus
me-DT that mtn-NM see-1sPR
'I see that mountain.' (T)
20.b mu-su aa Ci$-ere Cak-emus
I-ER that mtn-DT look-1sPR
'I'm looking at that mountain.' (T)
21.a bilaa mo-re reDiyu parud-us
yesterday me-DT radio heard-1s
'Yesterday I heard the radio.' (T)
21.b bilaa mu-su doos-is naalaa reDio kon d-aas
yesterday I-ER friend-? with radio ear give-1sP
'Yesterday I listened to the radio with friends.'

However, not every predicate of involuntary per-

ception or intellection governs a dative-of-agreement:

22 mo-re mi$To gun-ek oN (T)
me-DT good smell-a comes (3sPR)
'I smell a good smell.'

23 mo-re laa-i unyaal aal-i (S)
me-DT much-f thirst(f) came-f
'I am very thirsty.' (Cf. ex. 13)

24 mulaai-tye baal pasan(d) h-oN (S)
girl-DT boy(m) pleasant be-3sPRm
'The girl likes the boy.' (Cf. exx. 8 & 18)

Furthermore, the dative-of-agreement sometimes alternates with the ergative:

25 salim se ani kitaab si da$T-ao (T)
Salim ER this book(f) good seem-3sPm
'Salim liked (=likes) this book.'

26 tu-su jip paS-aai (S) 'You saw the jeep.'
you-ER jeep see-2sP (cf. ex. 6)

or even the nominative (cf. exx. 3 and 5):

27 mo pon-gi yaZo-Ze ek rupaay laal-us (S)
I-NM road-IN walk-ing one rupee found-1s
'I found a rupee while walking along the road.'

28 a$-bilaa ani baali zabaan amo$-EnEn (T)
nowadays these boys-NM language forget-3pPR
'Nowadays kids are forgetting the language.'

The use of the ergative or the nominative rather than the dative case for experiencers in clauses featuring the predicates listed in 3 through 14 occurred in about thirty percent of the relevant data. Three quarters of the variation involves paS 'see; regard' which for speaker (T) usually requires the dative but for speaker (S) almost always takes the ergative <11>.

Dative-of-agreement noun phrases exhibit the syntactic properties characteristic of [+agent] noun phrases in other dialects of Shina <12>. They trigger deletion of coreferential agents of non-finite clauses under conjunction:

29 iSin oD oD-e mo-re chaai laal-us (T)
much search search-CP me-DT key-NM got-1s
'(After) looking and looking I found the key.'

They permit (but do not require: cf. ex 31) the use of the reflexive possessive tomo:

30 mo-re tomo mukh na paS-aas (T)
me-DT self's face not saw-1s
'I didn't see my face.'

31 mo-re mei chaai ne laal-us
me-DT my key not got-1s
'I didn't find my key.' (T)

In Shina the transitivity of a predicate is consistently indicated by its conjugational class in the preterite: If intransitive the masculine first person singular ends in -os or -us; if transitive, it ends in -ékas or -íkas (Gilgit) or in -aas or -yaas (Gurez, Dras, Skardu). Considering the morphological properties of the ten or so predicates we found to allow the dative-of-agreement and comparing them with their cognates and analogues in other dialects of Shina, one is struck by their variety. One is opaque (32.a):

32.a skomuS- 'be thirsty' < Balti skom 'thirsty'

Four are morphologically intransitive and, when present in other dialects <1j>, agree with their themes rather than their experiencer noun phrases (32.b):

32.b sujon as- 'know (someone)' (asil-us (?) 'I was')
sujon b- 'recognize' (bil-us 'I became')
phikir b- 'worry (that)'
lEj- 'be obtained' (laal-us 'I found')

Two are morphologically intransitive (32.c)

32.c paruj- 'hear; understand' (parudus 'I heard')
amoS- 'forget' (amuTus 'I forgot')

yet show agreement with experiencers whose counterparts in the Gilgit dialect occur in the nominative:

33 ma SoN-uk parud-us (G) <14>
I-NM sound-one heard-1s
'I heard a sound.'
34 ma rE-sei nóom amúuT-us (G)
I-NM he-GN name forgot-1s
'I forgot his name.'

And two are transitive and agree with their experiencers which in other dialects of Shina are marked with the ergative case (32.d):

32.d paS- 'see' (paS-aas 'I saw')
da$T- 'regard, consider' (da$T-aas 'I felt')

The simplest historical scenario would be to reconstruct the members of the second group as originally intransitive with dative of experiencer and verb agreement with nominatively cased "themes" (the person or thing known, recognized or obtained for sujon as-,

sujon b- and lEj-. For phikir b- 'worry (that...)' the "theme" would be the noun phikir 'anxiety' and/or the clause dependent on it.) Since it is the experiencer in these expressions rather than the theme that displays the syntactic properties of agent, the change from agreement with theme to agreement with experiencer would be a change that brings form into closer alignment with function (the direction of change predicted by Cole et al. in their 1980 study and a change that readjusts dative-of-experiencer constructions in the direction of the Shina ergative <15>). A subsequent stage might be either the nominative or the ergative case for the experiencer in place of the dative. (This may be a change already in progress for lEj- 'be obtained; find': see 27.) paruj- and amoS- in the third group could be added to the second if we assume that the grammar of their counterparts in Gilgit dialect represents a later stage of development. Members of the fourth group, however, are morphologically transitive both in Skardu dialect and in all other dialects of Shina for which we have information. As such we must reconstruct ergative rather than dative case for their experiencers. The shift from ergative (which as a case is limited to [+agent, +subject] noun phrases) to dative, then, must be regarded as a change that has taken form one notch away from alignment with function for these particular lexical items.

Notes

<1>. We have retained Bailey's transcription.

<2>. Transcription is Shaw's.

<3>. The data presented in this paper were gathered over a four day period spent in Skardu in the summer of 1987 during the first phase of a survey of the languages of the Indus Valley, undertaken by Peter Hook and Elena Bashir. That survey comprises the linguistic component of a multi-disciplinary study of Pakistani culture, organized by Wilma Heston under the joint auspices of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and Lok Virsa, Islamabad. Financial and administrative support from the Smithsonian Institution is gratefully acknowledged. Special thanks to Adam Nayyar of Lok Virsa, Ghulam Muhmmad Baig of Gilgit, and Qazmi Saheb of Skardu for advice and introductions, and to John Myhill for his valuable comments and suggestions.

<4>. Our informants were Ghulam Mahadi, about 30 years of age, an employee of the Forest Department stationed in Skardu and a native of village Satpara (locally saspar) about ten miles south southwest of Skardu, and Gholam, fifty-five years of age, retired after nineteen years of military service to his native village Tandal which is about ten miles west of Skardu. Like

many settlements of Shina speakers in Baltistan, Satpara (S) and Tandal (T) are located on the flanks and high valleys of the Deosai Mountains on the left bank of the Indus. Skardu itself is Balti-speaking and our informants, like nearly all Shins (locally known as Brokpas) living in Baltistan, were bilingual in Balti and Shina (Brokskat). For elicitation we used Urdu, the chief language of literacy in the area.

<5>. In the system used here for the transcription of data from Shina capital letters indicate retroflexed versions of non-caps (T, D, R, Z, C, J). Three exceptions are "N" (for engma), "S" (for esh) and "E" (for epsilon). The retroflex voiceless apical fricative is represented by "$". The sound represented by non-cap "j" seems to vary freely between [j] and [ž].

<6>. Abbreviations used in this paper include:

CP.....affix of conjunctive participle
DT.....dative case or postposition
ER.....ergative case or postposition
f.....feminine gender
G.....Shina of Gilgit
GN.....genitive case or postposition
IN.....instrumental case or postposition
INF.....infinitive
m.....masculine gender
NM.....nominative case
P.....past tense affix
p.....plural number
PR.....present tense affix
QM.....question marker
s.....singular number
S.....Shina of village Satpara (Skardu)
T.....Shina of village Tandal (Skardu)
1, 2, 3.....first, second, third person

<7>. If the S in skomuSemus is a misheard $ then the form may be further analysable as skom(u) $-emus where $-emus < $ono 'to attach' (cf. Urdu lagaanaa). The Balti model seems to be purely intransitive: nothing in it corresponds to the vai 'water' of example 13.

a Na skom sEd (I thirsty am) 'I am thirsty.'

<8>. See Hook 1985:268-271 for discussion of the syntactic and conceptual bases for the difference in terminology.

<9>. Long vowels in Urdu are represented as sequences of the same vowel. Capitalization represents nasality in vowels, retroflexion in apical stops, and palatalization in fricatives.

<10> The more common construction, of course, is:

a mAI tumhaarii baat bhuul gayaa
I-NM your word forget went
'I forgot what you said.'

with nominative case for and verbal agreement with the noun phrase that expresses the person who forgets.

<11>. The figures are twenty-one datives to ten ergatives for speaker (T) versus nineteen ergatives to three datives for speaker (S) (in their use of paS-).
<12>. Shown in detail for Shina (Gilgit) in Hook and Zia (Ms.)
<13>. Drasi agrees with Skardu dialect, of course, in having the dative-of-agreement with lEj-. While we can not conclude anything from their silence, neither Shaw nor Bailey mentions the construction as characteristic of other predicates.
<14> Gilgit Shina data are from Muhammad Amin Zia in a transcription he and George Buddruss developed as an adaptation of Berger's phonological analysis of Burushaski (Berger 1960). See Buddruss 1988, fn 5.
<15>. Shina, like Burushaski, Balti, Dumaki, and other languages of Pakistan's far north, is ergative in all tenses. Verb agreement, however, is with the subject, not the object (in contrast to Kashmiri, Hindko, Urdu, Pashto, Panjabi, and other more southerly languages). See Schmidt 1985.

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